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S/CT FOR ARNOLD SIERRA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/05/2027

TAGS: PTER PREL IR AR

SUBJECT: ARGENTINE PREPARATIONS FOR NOV. 5-8 INTERPOL
GENERAL ASSEMBLY VOTE ON IRANIAN CAPTURE NOTICES

REF: BUENOS AIRES 1971

Classified By: Ambassador E. Anthony Wayne for reasons
1.4(a)(b) and (d)

¶1. PLEASE DISREGARD BUENOS AIRES 1990 WITH THE SAME SUBJECT
LINE, SENT BY ERROR. POST WILL RECALL OOB OCTOBER 5.

¶2. (S) Summary: DCM and EmbOffs met October 4 with the Foreign Ministry's Ambassador Guillermo Gonzalez to discuss the GOA's preparations for the November 5-8 Interpol General Assembly meeting in Marrakech, Morocco. Gonzalez explained that on October 3 the MFA sent an ALDAC to its diplomatic missions with instructions for lobbying host countries to support Argentina's request for the issuance of international capture notices for the six Iranians indicted in the 1994 AMIA terrorist bombing. In Buenos Aires, the MFA is calling in resident foreign ambassadors and charges over the next two weeks to lobby for support. Gonzalez is traveling to Lyon the week of October 8 to meet with Interpol Secretary Ron Noble and Interpol's chief legal counselor to discuss the Nov. 5-8 agenda, procedures and possible actions the Iranians might undertake.

¶3. (S) Gonzalez said MFA is concerned about Iranian lobbying activities, but has no specifics. He asked for USG assistance in trying to determine which countries the GOI might be lobbying. DCM noted Embassy had requested Washington assistance in determining Iranian activities (reftel) and also said we were open to MFA suggestions on which governments it felt it would be useful for the USG to lobby. Following the MFA meeting on October 4, AMIA Special Prosecutor Alberto Nisman (protect) called the Ambassador separately to express his concern that not enough was being done to support Argentina's case given that Iran is actively engaged politically in an effort to derail a positive vote for Argentina's request for international capture notices. He stressed the need for active U.S. support. In light of this feedback from the critical Argentine players, we reiterate our request in reftel for any available information on Iranian lobbying efforts in advance of the Marrakech meetings. End Summary

¶4. (C) DCM, Assistant LegAtt Frank Oliva and PolOff met October 4 with the MFA's Ambassador Guillermo Gonzalez, legal advisor Carlos Foradori and North America Desk Deputy

Director Jaime Ureta to discuss the GOA's preparations for the November 5-8 Interpol General Assembly meeting in Marrakech, Morocco. Gonzalez said he was confident that the General Assembly vote on the AMIA international capture notices would go the right way, but affirmed that it was the GOA's "duty" to guarantee it turned out that way.

¶15. (S) Gonzalez said the MFA had sent out an ALDAC to its missions with instructions to lobby host governments to support the GOA request. The ALDAC contained a non-paper in Spanish on the issue, which the MFA is translating into French and English for transmission to its missions. Embassy will get a copy of the English translation as soon as it is in final. Gonzalez said he was experienced enough as a diplomat to know never to underestimate the people on the other side of the table and said he knew the Iranians were already active, although he said he had no specifics. Gonzalez stated that this was where the GOA could use USG assistance, in trying to find out who the Iranians were lobbying.

¶16. (S) DCM reassured Gonzalez of continued USG support and noted that the Embassy had already asked Washington to try to ascertain as much of that information as possible (reftel). DCM also stated that we were open to the GOA's suggestions on which governments it would be useful for the USG to lobby.

Gonzalez noted that, while the ALDAC went to all their missions (except Tehran), the GOA diplomatic coverage was limited, particularly in places like sub-Saharan Africa, where it has only five missions. Gonzalez said that their mission in New York would reach out to those countries where Argentina has no diplomatic presence. He also said the MFA's regional bureaus were calling in resident Ambassadors here in Buenos Aires to lobby on this end.

¶17. (S) Asked about Venezuelan lobbying in the region on behalf of Iran's position, Gonzalez said they were not aware of BRV activity. He observed that BRV activity in Interpol meetings has dropped off in recent years, and stated that if the Venezuelan delegation failed to show for the Marrakech vote, that would not be such a bad outcome. Nonetheless, he continued, the MFA will make additional, high-level overtures to Caracas, as well as Havana and Brazil. The DCM asked whether the GOA wanted the USG to intervene with the GOB; Gonzalez replied, "Give us some time." He said that initial discussions with Itamaraty generated a somewhat bureaucratic response about the independence of the Interpol representative, but that Argentina's Ambassador in Brasilia would contact the Foreign Minister directly and Gonzalez is working the issue with Brazil's Ambassador here. A/LegAtt noted that he had discussed the issue with the chief of Interpol's regional office in Buenos Aires, a former director of the Brazilian Federal Police, and impressed the importance of being prepared to counter Iranian efforts in preparation for Marrakech, and at the General Assembly in Marrakech.

¶18. (S) Gonzalez also said that he is traveling to Lyon on October 8, and will have meetings with Interpol Secretary Ron Noble and the organization's chief legal counselor on October 10 and 11. Gonzalez said they knew that Iran had been in contact with the legal counselor, and said he wanted to know what was being discussed. He said he also wanted to get the agenda for the November 5-8 meeting, ask about the procedures of the vote and get information on any possible developments or surprises the Iranians might try to pull. Gonzalez said he was concerned the Iranians might try for a "no action" resolution or motion, if this is possible under Interpol rules, and wanted to talk to Noble and the chief legal counselor to head off that possibility. He asked if we had anyone at Interpol in Lyon with whom he could meet. LegAtt will pass on Gonzalez's contact information to the U.S. Interpol representative in Lyon.

¶19. (S) EmbOffs, will meet again with Gonzalez when he returns from Lyon, and DCM promised to share with him any information we might come up with on Iranian lobbying activities (requested in reftel).

¶10. (C) AMIA Special Prosecutor Alberto Nisman (protect) called the Ambassador later October 4 to express his concerns that not enough was being done on the diplomatic front to win support for Argentina's position. He said he had been told that the Iranians were offering to pay for African delegations to fly to Morocco, that they were pressing others to vote against the resolution, and that they were trying to arrange a secret vote so countries would not have to be seen voting for Iran. He stressed the need for active U.S. support.

¶11. (S) Comment: The MFA is late getting started with its lobbying efforts but seems to understand the need for aggressive engagement to prevail in Marrakech. The best way for us to support the Argentines in this effort is to obtain and share information on pre-Marrakech GOI lobbying efforts, as requested reftel. In our discussion with Gonzalez, we made the point that the GOA should not allow itself to be drawn into an "Iran vs. Argentina" debate. Rather, it should approach this (and present it to their interlocutors) as a more straight forward procedural issue, i.e., support for a unanimous Executive Committee decision. The GOI will try to impugn the Argentine investigation (i.e., raise the problem-plagued first investigation), but Interpol's legal office, in its analysis of the Argentine case, made clear to the Executive Committee the differences between the two investigations and supported Argentina's call for the issuance of Red Notices.

WAYNE